

Spire

Barre Congregational Church, UCC

Phone—978-355-4041

Email—barrechurch@gmail.com



2016

The Terrible Beauty of His Birth

Bruce C. Swaffield PhD

In the joyful celebration of Christmas, there is a certain note of sadness that echoes throughout the ages: Jesus was born to die. His birth brings hope and promise. Yet, it is his death that makes possible our salvation.

Most all of the great Renaissance paintings of Madonna and child reflect the reality of Jesus' life. The loving eyes of Mary look down at the newborn child with happiness and sorrow. She is full of delight and wonder. But her tears of bliss are mingled with mourning, for she knows what he must do. She realizes what his birth means. He must also suffer death.

In the background of the manger scene is the cross, already waiting. All too soon it will hold the body of this tiny, innocent child. All too soon his life on earth will end. He will take the sins of the world with him into death and rise victorious.

We have much to be thankful for this Christmas as we remember our Savior's birth 2,005 years ago. Not only did He come down to earth, but He also allowed Himself to be tortured and crucified – all for our sake. He now looks down on us from His heavenly throne, with His heart full of compassion, and says, "I did all this because I love you." There was nothing loud or flashy about His birth. Jesus was born in a lonely, dark stable among animals and nearby shepherds. The world barely knew about this event that would change all time and life. There were no colored lights, no Christmas carols, no Santa's, no snow and no presents, except the most important gift of all.

What God did on that night is beyond comprehension. Through His Son, He came to earth to reveal what could not be seen by the naked eye, what could not be understood through the rational mind. He showed the world a hope that could be experienced only through the heart by the power of His love and grace.

Behind the tinsel and trees is a light that shines brighter than all of the others. Sadly, many will not see it because they are caught up in all of the decorations and displays. They will not truly realize what they are doing when they give presents to loved ones. Their simple act of love is re-presenting the greatest act of love the world has ever known.

The words of John 3:16 take on new meaning when put into the context of Christmas morning: "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son." Because of His overwhelming compassion for each one of us, God sacrificed His Son both in life and death. Today, we can celebrate with hope in our heart and joy in our soul for Jesus' birth gave us new life now and forever.

Inside this Spire	
Message	Page 1
Prayer Con-	Page 2
Fair info. Thank you/ Holiday Wor- ship info	Page 3
From Sue, Deacons, Mis- sions, Church Com. Food Pantry	Page 4
Collectors/ treasurers	Page 5
Calendar	Page 7



The Annual Church Fair

Saturday, December 3rd from 10-2.

Crafters, Baked Goods, Raffles, & Tea

This is an **All** church event. The Women's Fellowship **NEEDS** your help. If you can bake, make candy contribute to the raffle or if you are a crafter and would like to rent a table please contact Cathy Mikniatis, 978-355-4086 and she will get you in touch with the right person.

The Women would like the help of the men of the church after the fair to help **clean up** after the fair is over.

Thank You



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who supported the annual wreath sale this year.

I would also like to thank the ladies that sold & called for orders, and the ladies and men who delivered wreaths. I can't forget those ladies that gave up three days to decorate the 143 wreaths that were sold.

I would especially like to thank those of you who purchased wreaths and made Barre Congregational Church part of your holiday.

Wendy Isgro

December Worship Services

Sunday, December 4 (Second Sunday of Advent) — Communion will be celebrated by Rev. Laura Friedman

Sunday, December 11 (Third Sunday of Advent) - Rev. Margaret Keyser

Sunday, December 18 (Fourth Sunday of Advent) - Rev. Margaret Keyser

Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) - 7:00 pm—Family Christmas Eve Service

11:00 pm—Candlelight Service—Rev. Laura Friedman

Sunday, December 25— NO Church

From Sue Musnicki

Sue is looking for children and youth to be part of the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service. There are spots for readers, musicians, and candle lighters. Please contact Sue Musnicki or call the church office, 978-355-4041.

From the Deacons

The diaconate has been working to fill the pulpit each week. Laura Friedman and Margaret Keyser will be our supply ministers until March. We are hopeful that an interim will be seeking to join us and work with us to grow.

We have been working with Laura Friedman and Charlie Page with the Memorial Services for Corry Trask, Olive Tuttle and Alma Splaine.

We are working on our Christmas celebrations in our church. We will have Christmas Sunday on December 18, Christmas Children's Service will be at 7 pm Christmas Eve.

We will have the Christmas Candlelight service at 11pm on Christmas Eve. There will be a NO service on Christmas Day.

Please come and join us for these services.

The Diaconate



From the Missions Committee

There are 75 Angels placed on the Gordon Cooley Giving Tree. Once again, this year there are angels for the Stetson Boys and the angels for the children in the community. Please take one and help make Christmas merry for the those in need.

Gifts should be dropped off no later than December 16th. Please make sure the angel is attached to the gift.

Community Friendship Supper

Everyone is welcome!

Bring a friend and or family members.

Thursday, December 15, 2016
Served from 5:30 pm –6:30 pm

A free will offering may be given. The offering is used by the Mission's Committee for those in need in our church and community..

From the Church Committee

The Church Committee is completing projects associated with winterizing the building for the winter months. The flashing over the back door has been replaced. This will help prevent water build up on the back outside wall that has seeped into the baby room causing damage to the plater. The snow fence has been installed and the outside lights have been changed to activate earlier with the time change. Some of you will be seeing the sand and snow shovels by the back door and the door to Fellowship Hall.

Sarah Dyer has done a fantastic job researching and applying for a Grant through Fidelity Bank *(Barre Savings) to have the church roof replaced. We will keep you updated through the process. Sarah is also working directly with several insurance companies in hope to lower our rates. Currently, the church insurance is approximately \$10,300.00 a year.

We want to thank Bonni Holmes and Wendy Isgro for all their work this year. They have done a great job supporting the Church Committee. Let's not forget the wonderful work Bob Swindell has done for the committee and the church. There are so many things Bob did that the committee over the years has taken for granted. We miss his knowledge and expertise.

We want to wish the entire church family and community a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.. Please come and Pray with us throughout the Advent Season.

Respectfully, Ann Clark Chairman

Nominating Committee

It's time to think about the annual church meeting in January and the filling of committees and officers of the church. Please consider taking a more active role in the church, by serving on a committee or as an officer. Please see a member of the nominating committee to find out more about the duties and responsibilities of committees and officers. Currently, the nominating committee consists of Ann Clark, Jack Lathrop, and Sue Musnicki.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry needs the following item:

Canned carrots, canned peas, canned cranberry sauce, cans of Chef Boyadee, Parmalat (shelf milk), raisins, fruit juices.

While all contributions are appreciated, donations of food to the pantry between now and our next distributions would be most helpful if they concentrated on the above foods.

The next distribution is Wednesday, December 14th. Set up will be on Tuesday, December 13th at 9:00 am and 6:00 pm

Collector's Report

Loose	177.00
Current	6453.00
Missions	346.00
UBS	492.61
UCC Dues	54800
Sat AA	100.00
Tuesday NA	20.00
Thursday AA	40.00
Grapevine	30.00
Rent	100.00
Memorial Corey Trask	50.00
Total	\$8,316.61

From the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee has a grateful attitude for those who have been able to send in their pledge cards. Thus far, there is over \$35,000 pledged. There's still time to send in your pledge card. Consider this a little reminder.

Together, let's all practice our grateful attitude.

Treasurer's Report

Expenses 1/1/16—11/30/16

Payroll	55,110.00
Office Supplies	1,847.00
Telephone & Internet	2,342.00
Postage	207.00
Diaconate	104.00
General Maintenance	6,148.00
Stewardship	75.00
Music	147.00
Christian Ed	107.00
Misc	688.00
Flowers	0.00
Sewer	400.00
Water	258.00
Heat & Gas	3,288.00
Electricity	2,686.00
Insurance	8,826.00
Snow Removal	840.00
Piano / Organ	1,495.00
Alarm	1,490.00
TOTAL	\$86,058.00

<u>Income</u>	
Loose	2,990.00
Pledges ***	62,480.00
Other ****	9,448.00
Investment Income	21,435.00
Total	\$96,353.00

Retained Earnings: \$10,295

***** 2017 pledges - \$850**

******Women's fellowship donated \$3000**

Transferred from savings for ordinary expenses: \$3,617.00

Beginning balance in checkbook: \$2,504.48

Please fill our and return to the church office. **Email information is very important, not filling out the information could result in removal from the email list.**

Dear Members and Friends:

Please take a few minutes to fill out the following form and mail the form back to the church or drop it off at the church office. I am desperately trying to update the mailing and emailing information and the birthday lists.

There have been many changes to postal deliveries through the years and sometimes the information does not always get back to the church office correctly.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Birthdays:

Adults: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Children: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Anniversary: _____

I would like to continue to receive the *Spire*. Yes _____ No _____

I would like to register my children for Sunday: Yes _____ No: _____

I have not received Stewardship information and I would like to know more: Yes: _____ No: _____

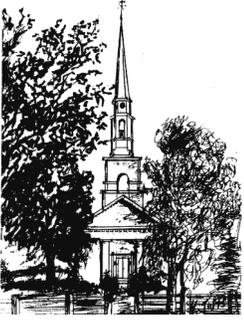
Please fill out and return this form no later than December 31, 2016

Thank you,
Wendy Isgro
Church Secretary

December 2016

For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given....Isaiah 6

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	2 Fair set up	3 10-2 Annual Church Fair 7:00 AA
4 8:30 choir warm up 9:30 Service/ Communion / Sunday school 11:00 Coun- cil Meeting	5 6-9 Girl Scouts	6 9-1 Wendy's hours 3:30 –5:00 Mu- sic Rehearsal 6:00 Bell Choir 6:45 Choir Re- hearsal 7:00 NA	7 9-1 Wendy's hours 4:30 –5:30 Maplewinds 6-8 Maple winds 6:30 Church Committee 7:00 Boy Scouts	8 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	9	10 11:00 Me- morial Ser- vice for Al- ma Splaine 7:00 AA
11 9:30 Service/ Sunday School	12 6-9 Girl Scouts	13 9-1 Wendy's hours 9:00 Food Pan- try set-up 6:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Food Pan- try set-up 7:00 Choir Re- hearsal 7:00 NA	14 9-1 Wendy's hours 10-12 Food Pantry 4:30 –5:30 Maplewinds 6-8 Maple winds 7:00 Boy Scouts	15 9-1 Wendy's hours 5:30 Friend- ship Com- munity Sup- per 7:00 AA	16	17 7:00 AA
18 8:30 Choir warm up 8:45 Bell Choir warm- up 9:30 Service/ Sunday School	19 6-9 Girl Scouts	20 9-1 Wendy's hours 3:30 –5:00 Mu- sic Rehearsal 7:00 Choir Re- hearsal 7:00 NA	21 9-1 Wendy's hours 4:30 –5:30 Maplewinds 6-8 Maple winds 7:00 Boy Scouts	22 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	23	24 7:00 Family Christmas Eve Service 11:00 Christmas Eve Service
25 9:30 Service Christmas Day	26 6-9 Girl Scouts	27 9-1 Wendy's hours 3:30 –5:00 Mu- sic Rehearsal 7:00 Choir Re- hearsal 7:00 NA	28 9-1 Wendy's hours 4:30 –5:30 Maplewinds 6-8 Maple winds 7:00 Boy Scouts	29 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	30	31 New Year's Eve



Barre Congregational Church
P.O. Box 936
Barre, MA 01005
*The world needs the distinct values, vision
and voice of the United Church of Christ-
Continuing Testament.
Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives.*

*Unto Us
a Child is Born*

